

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 207890
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SUBJECT: CONDITIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

1. DEPARTMENT IS PREPARING COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY SUMMARY
OF HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS. EMBASSY'S COMMENTS ARE
REQUESTED ON FOLLOWING REPORT FOR PNG.

A. CONDITIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

1. INTEGRITY OF THE PERSON

ALL CITIZENS HAVE THE BASIC RIGHTS GUARANTEED BY THE
CONSTITUTION. CITIZENS ARE PROTECTED BY LAW FROM SLAVERY,
SERVITUDE, TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT
OR PUNISHMENT AS WELL AS FROM ARBITRARY ARREST, DETENTION
OR EXILE. THE RIGHT TO A FAIR HEARING AND A FAIR TRIAL
IS GUARANTEED.

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 STATE 207890

2. CIVIL AND POLITICAL LIBERTIES

FREEDOM OF RELIGION, EXPRESSION, OPINION AND ASSEMBLY ARE
PROTECTED BY LAW. THERE IS A FREE PRESS. PAPUA NEW GUINEA
HELD ITS FIRST ELECTIONS SINCE INDEPENDENCE (SEPTEMBER
1975) IN JULY 1977. BY ALL ACCOUNTS THESE WERE FREE AND

AND OPEN. THERE ARE NO RESTRICTIONS OF MOVEMENT WITHIN PAPUA NEW GUINEA OR ON FOREIGN TRAVEL OR EMIGRATION.

3. TRENDS IN GOVERNMENTAL POLICIES RELATED TO FULFILLMENT OF BASIC NEEDS

A. AS A DEVELOPING, NEWLY INDEPENDENT NATION, PAPUA NEW GUINEA LACKS MUCH OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIRED TO MEET THE BASIC NEEDS FOR FOOD, SHELTER, HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION. HOWEVER, IT IS APPROACHING THIS PROBLEM IN A METHODICAL MANNER AND IS MAKING EXCELLENT PROGRESS DESPITE LIMITED RESOURCES.

B. CORRUPTION IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA IS NOT A SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM.

4. RESPONSIBILITY FOR PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD

A DEEP CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IS EVIDENT THROUGHOUT THE STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA. VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS FOR SECURITY OR OTHER REASONS ARE NOT CONDONED.

5. INDEPENDENT, OUTSIDE INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 STATE 207890

THE DEPARTMENT IS NOT AWARE OF ANY ALLEGATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA OR OF ANY REQUESTS FOR INDEPENDENT, OUTSIDE INVESTIGATIONS INTO HUMAN RIGHTS THERE. THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT PAPUA NEW GUINEA WOULD OBJECT TO SUCH AN INVESTIGATION.

B. ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. OBJECTIVES

OUR OBJECTIVES IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA ARE TO ENCOURAGE THE MAINTENANCE OF THE PRESENT HIGH STANDARDS OF HUMAN RIGHTS RELATING TO INTEGRITY OF THE PERSON AND CIVIL AND POLITICAL LIBERTIES WHILE ASSISTING, WHERE POSSIBLE, TO MEET BASIC NEEDS FOR FOOD, SHELTER, HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION.

2. REACTIONS TO US HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY

PAPUA NEW GUINEA HAS BEEN SUPPORTIVE OF THE NEW US HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY.

3. IMPLICATIONS FOR CHANGES IN HUMAN RIGHTS
CONDITIONS

SOCIETY IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA RANGES FROM UNIVERSITY
EDUCATED URBAN DWELLERS TO PRIMITIVE TRIBAL GROUPS
BARELY EMERGED FROM THE STONE AGE. GIVEN THIS SITUATION,
CHANGES IN HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS WILL TAKE CONSIDERABLE
TIME AND RESOURCES. HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT IS WELL
AWARE OF THE NEED TO MOVE AHEAD AND IS DOING ITS BEST
TO MEET BASIC HUMAN NEEDS. OBVIOUSLY, PROGRESS IN THIS
AREA WILL NOT BE UNIFORM ACROSS THE COUNTRY. BE THAT AS
IT MAY, THERE IS REASON TO BE CONFIDENT THAT EVERY EFFORT
WILL BE MADE TO MEET THE BASIC NEEDS OF THE WIDEST
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UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 207890

NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME.

4. IMPACT OF US ACTIONS

US ACTIONS HAVE BEEN AND ARE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE TO BE
FAVORABLY ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF
PAPUA NEW GUINEA.

5. LIKELIHOOD OF PAPUA NEW GUINEAN SUPPORT IN
GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

PAPUA NEW GUINEA IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE TO BE GENERALLY
SUPPORTIVE OF US EFFORTS TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS. CHRISTOPHER

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